

Arlington Towers Will Go to Highest Bidder Wednesday

Shafts Used to Transmit
Messages to Ships at Sea
Will Go for Junk

By NELSON M. SHEPARD.
Arlington's famous talking towers
are doomed for early destruction as
hazards to flying.

No longer of any real value to the Navy in communicating with the fleets at sea or relaying weather reports to mariners since the introduction of the short-wave radio, the three tall wireless towers are to be sold Wednesday to the highest bidder. Like an old car outdated by streamline models, the steel frames are to be dismantled and disposed of as junk.

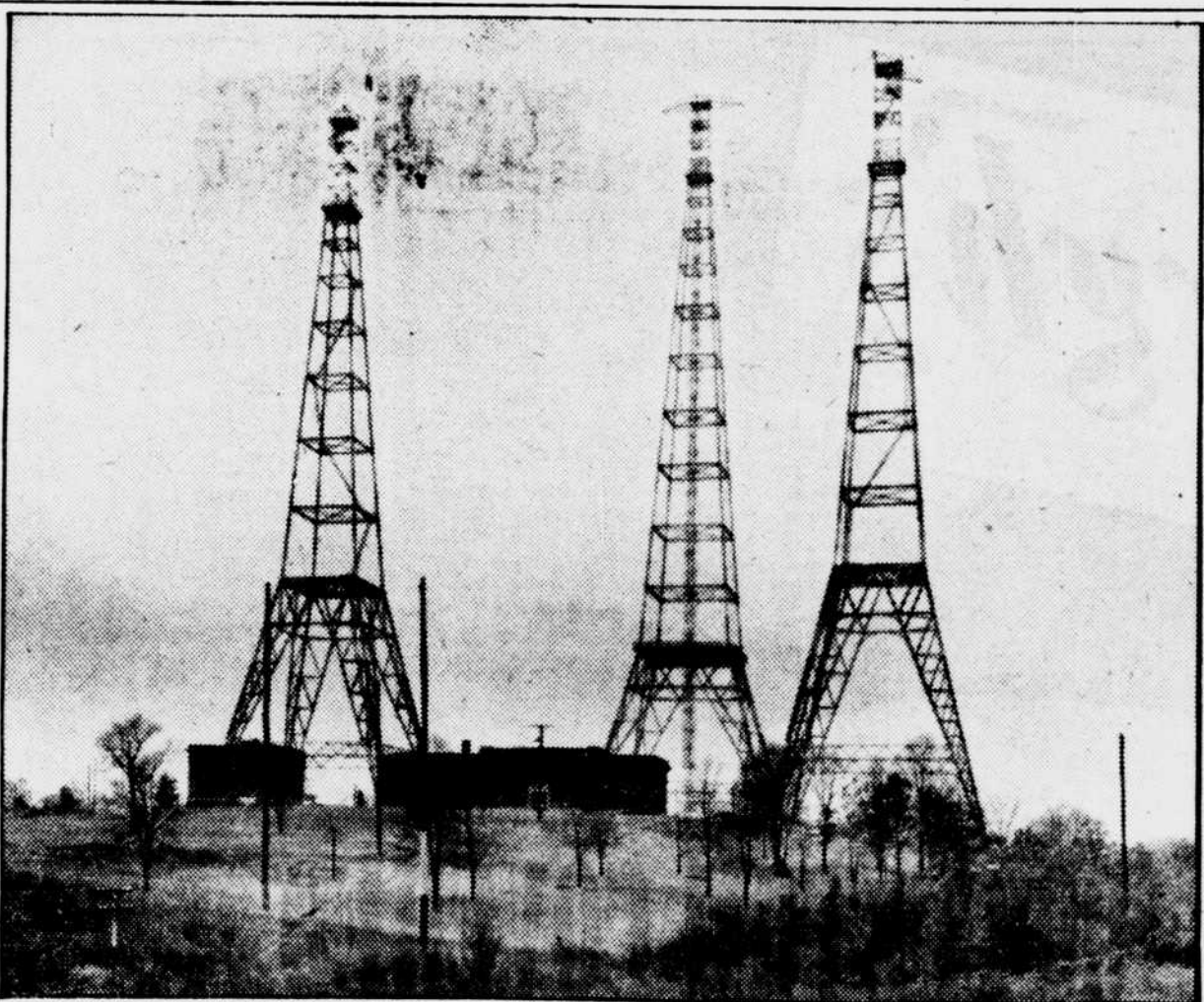
The order for their removal as hazards to air navigation came as no surprise. Their doom was pronounced several years ago when it was decided to establish the new Washington Airport at Gravelly Point on the Potomac. Now that the airport is nearing completion the Navy is keeping a promise it made to remove the obstruction.

Main Tower 600 Feet High.
The main Arlington tower is 600 feet high. The other two are 450 feet. When they were erected 23 years ago the main tower, 50 feet higher than the Washington Monument, offered no problem. Aviation was still in its infancy.

On the day the Navy's plans to establish its wireless station at Arlington were announced, three planes took off from the College Park field simultaneously to constitute a record for "mass" flight around Washington. It was the first forewarning of Washington's future air traffic problem.

Since the "short wave" made the wireless station obsolete, the "Three Sisters," as they have become known, haven't been as talkative as in earlier years. When they were in fine form, the eight powerful transmitters enabled the sisters to chatter away at the rate of 2,400 words a minute. One needs an adding machine to estimate their day's flow of words.

Station Soon to Be Silenced.
Some years ago two other smaller towers were erected across the road from the "Three Sisters." Soon, the



ARLINGTON WIRELESS TOWERS DOOMED—Because they are hazards to air traffic, the "Three Sisters" at the Naval Radio Station, Arlington, Va., have been ordered removed. Their height, 600 and 450 feet, is the chief reason, in view of the early completion of the new Washington Airport. Once very talkative, the "Three Sisters" utter few words these days. The introduction of the short-wave radio has made the Arlington station obsolete.

—Star Staff Photo.

effect the short wave radio has had on the other old-time wireless stations maintained on the coasts and in island possessions as distant as Samoa and in the Philippines. The lid was clamped down, no doubt, because of the present emergency.

Most Powerful Station.

When the Arlington Radio Station was established in 1912, the 10,000-kilowatt machine supplying the sending power was the most powerful in the world. The 600-foot tower was then the world's tallest radio support.

The Navy had been testing the sending apparatus at the Brant Rock station, before its final installation. It was found the distance a wireless message may be sent depended only on the height of the towers and the power of the generator. So, as nothing as high as 600 feet had

Arlington station will be silenced forever and abandoned. The four 600-foot towers located on Greenburg Point, across the Severn River from the United States Naval Academy, are to handle all radio messages from the Navy and other Government departments in the future.

More and more in recent years the Annapolis station, established during the World War, has been taking business away from Arlington. Testimony given during recent hearings on the naval appropriation bill gave the information that the service of the Arlington station has never been entirely satisfactory.

The Navy Department was unwilling to give out much information about the Arlington towers. Their work was finished, that was all. It would give none at all about the

been attempted, it was thought that height would be a good one to start with, not only in view of the actual work to be accomplished but as a forecast of experiments to be conducted.

To get the best results, the towers were arranged in the form of a triangle, the central one being the apex and standing 600 feet. The other two towers, 450 feet each were to be self supporting. Over 900 tons of steel were used in the construction.

Planned Concrete Towers.

The original plan called for concrete towers but as one was to be higher than the Washington Monument, "the patriotic Navy decided it might detract from the memorial to the First President."

The Navy, for years, had conducted Coast Guard stations and the

invention of the wireless was important. By 1911 it had completed a chain of wireless stations on both coasts in order to connect the chain directly with Washington and also to communicate with ships at sea, the Arlington station was proposed.

Congress also had passed a safety law requiring sea-going ships to carry wireless capable of sending messages at least 100 miles. The wireless had gone a long way in development since Marconi was first awarded a patent by Great Britain in 1897.

In November, 1912, testing at the Arlington station started. Messages were sent successfully to the U. S. S. Salem during a trip to Liberia, West Africa. On the strength of the performance, Congress appropriated \$5,000,000 for additional stations at San Diego, Calif., San Francisco, the Panama Canal Zone, Hawaii and the Philippines. One year later, signals were exchanged between Arlington and a small powered station in San Francisco, marking the first time the continent had been spanned by radio.

Paris Signals Picked Up.

About December, 1912, the Arlington station had picked up signals from the Eiffel Tower in Paris. The volume of traffic by 1915 made it necessary to employ the present remote-control system at Arlington. By its actual sending was done in the Navy Building and signals were exchanged between Arlington and a small powered station in San Francisco, marking the first time the continent had been spanned by radio.

The prime objective of the Navy was to communicate at all times with its ships at sea. Secondly, the mission undertaken at Arlington was to signal the time, weather conditions, ice and location of derelicts to mariners. To lonely ships passing in the night in distant seas the service was a great help. Later, as it developed, complaints were heard about weather and nautical reports interrupting music or news broadcast to the fleet or to passenger ships from the Navy's far-flung radio stations.

In time the 600-foot towers were established as standard size by the Navy, although the World War saw the erection of a radio station at

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Racial Understanding Is Object of Meeting

The Washington Urban League, an inter-racial social work agency, is sponsoring a meeting tomorrow night at the old Interior Department Auditorium to call public attention to the need for complete racial understanding in the United States as a defense measure. Speakers will be Dr. Will W. Alexander of the labor supply section, National Defense Commission; Dr. Robert C. Weaver, assistant to Sidney Hillman of the Defense Commission; Jesse O. Thomas, field director of the National Urban League, and George W. Goodman, secretary of the Washington Urban League. Waldron Faulkner is president of the local branch.

Committee to Be Named To Award Star Trophy

A committee to award The Evening Star Trophy to an individual or group which performed outstanding civic service during the last year, will be named at a meeting of the Arlington County (Va.) Civic Federation Tuesday at 8 p.m. in the Lyon Park Community House. The trophy was presented to the federation two years ago by Newbold Noyes, associate editor of The Star, and is to be awarded by the federation annually.

Croix d'Hins, France, with towers 820 feet high. This was the famous Lafayette Station. In November, 1917, the Navy authorized the erection of the Annapolis station.



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